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CROSSING WATER.

It is a very easy thing to cross water, when a commodious bridge has been made for us, or a boat pulled by a sturdy waterman is at our service; and we take advantage of these ordinary conveniences without much reflecting upon the difficulties that would oppose us, supposing neither bridge nor boat had been handy.

It has been the fate of the present writer to reside in a country where bridges had not been built, and where boats and watermen were unknown; rivers were there crossed in a primitive manner, either by wading or swimming; one's goods, chattels, and effects were floated over by the aid of rafts, constructed on the spot; horses and cattle in like manner were swum over, and thus we crossed the water. It was, however, a business of labour, and one which often resulted in an accident, or a loss of some kind; and we then fully appreciated the difficulties of transit, and learned how the feat was to be accomplished in the simplest and safest manner.

We will first describe how and where we ought to look for fords in a river, so as to be able to cross without swimming; we will then describe the various aids which may be easily made use of, if we purpose swimming; after which a description will be given of some rough-and-ready bridges.

In a straight reach of a river, we are very likely to find a ford, which will be at right angles to the direction of the stream. In order to find a ford, we should procure several sticks of various lengths, to the end of each of which a stone may be attached, so that the sticks will float in various positions, some vertical, and others inclined at different angles. These sticks being allowed to drift down the stream, will stop immediately they come to shallow water, because the stone at the bottom will then drag and retard the stick. If the stream run through a winding channel, we shall most probably find the ford between two projections of the bank on opposite sides. This is in consequence of the stream always carrying with it a certain quantity of sand or silt, which is deposited in the greatest

quantity by the stream at those places where the current is least rapid. In many rivers which are in most places wide and deep, there will by this means be found only narrow channels of deep water, so that a weak swimmer might reduce the distance over which he would have to swim considerably. Any voyager down the Thames must have observed how the river-steamers have in many cases to turn and twist, in order to avoid the long shoals that stretch out at various parts, and these lessen the width of the deep water, and occur almost invariably at the convexities of the banks. If the river be wide and generally deep, a boat with a pole attached to it may be used, the pole being kept under water to the required depth by means of a weight attached to it.

In mountainous districts, rivers are variable in depth at different times, not only on account of the quantity of water brought down by heavy rains, but because a rush of water usually deepens the channels in some places, and makes them more shallow in others. If the stream flow at the bottom with a velocity of about six inches per second, fine sand will just be carried along by it, whilst more heavy materials will not be moved. If, then, a stream flowed usually at this rate, and a heavy rain came on, so as to cause the stream to travel at the rate of two feet per second, not only the fine sand, but also coarse sand, gravel, and pebbles, about an inch in diameter, would be carried away. This debris would of course be deposited again, the instant that the velocity of the stream decreased, and we should find this would occur between two projections of the bank on opposite sides of the river. Thus, after a 'freshet,' the depth of a river in various parts will usually be found to have varied considerably, a ford being found at places where one did not previously exist, and deep water where there were previously shallows.

Any small water-course produced by rain yields us a very good model from which to study the bed of most rivers. After heavy rain, many of these little streams will be found flowing along the sides of roads, &c.; they are mountain torrents on a

small scale. They force their way along just as does a torrent, deposit sand and gravel in the same manner, and when dry, reveal the contours of the bed, and shew where would have been the best place to have attempted a crossing, had we been pigmies, to whom the obstacle would have appeared a torrent.

We once practically experienced how rapidly the bed of a river may be altered by a rush of water even in a few hours. We had crossed a South African river a little after daylight, the water scarcely reaching to our horse's girths; we noted on the bank the height of the water, and continued our journey; during the day, heavy rains fell inland, and the river was swollen in consequence; during the afternoon and evening, the water rushed down in volumes; but at noon on the following day it had almost lessened to its original quantity. During the afternoon, we reached the ford over which we had walked our horse on the previous morning; we examined the bank of the stream, and found that only four inches more water was in the bed than on the first occasion of our crossing; we therefore made our preparations, and urged our pony forwards; scarcely had he advanced two lengths into the water, when he stumbled, gave a plunge, and we found the water above our waist, whilst our pony was swimming, the bed of the river being beyond his depth.

The preparations which we made for crossing the river, and which ought never to be neglected, were to take our feet out of the stirrups, which should then be crossed over the saddle: there are two reasons for this precaution: first, it is not improbable that the horse we are riding may be a bad swimmer, or may become timid; in either case, the animal, almost invariably, upon finding itself in deep water, allows its hind-legs to sink, in order to try and touch the ground; in doing so, it usually 'turns turtle,' and for a few seconds struggles and plunges on its back or sides. During this performance, it is not improbable that one's feet, or a foot, may become entangled in the stirrup-iron, and when the animal turns over, we of course must quit the saddle, but being held by the foot, are dragged along under water in anything but a pleasant position. This is one very good reason for crossing the stirrups over the saddle.

Another reason for this proceeding is, that many horses in swimming raise the hind-legs very high in order to strike out, and thus incur a risk of putting their hoofs in the stirrup-iron, when the horse might either be drowned, or the stirrup-leather broken. To ride a swimming horse well is not a very easy thing: in the first place, we must lean well forward, so that our body rests nearly on the animal's crest; we must not attempt to use the curb, in case we have one, or, in fact, to meddle with his mouth in any way; we can steer him by the aid of a switch, which will enable us to turn his head slightly in any direction. If, however, it is necessary to use the reins at all, we should do so with the hands very low, and employ only the slightest pull. Horses are like men in their relative swimming powers, some swimming strongly and high out of the water, others with difficulty and low down. One of my horses, whose skill in the water I often tried, allowed himself to sink deeply until only his head was visible; with his neck stretched out like a dog, he would coolly swim away, carrying me on his back, and never shewing

the least excitement during the whole business. Another steed invariably plunged and snorted upon entering deep water, and was as likely as not to turn over, and oblige us to take care of ourselves.

Whenever we have to carry weight across the water, we should not neglect to bring to our aid some artificial means by which to gain additional buoyancy. We get out of condition for swimming just as we may for running, and to find ourselves getting exhausted in the middle of a deep river, is a serious matter; it is but little consolation to us to remember that six months previously we could have swum double the distance with ease; an additional buoyancy under these circumstances is very pleasant. For an aid in this matter, some three or four dozen common wine-corks do very well; they may be strung on strong string, and fastened round the shoulders. These will enable us to carry two or three pounds of 'dry goods' on the top of our head, when we swim across a river. Bladders also will be excellent aids, and an airtight hat also. Even a person who cannot swim can float easily by the aid of a hat, which should be held just below the surface, so that the air inside it buoys one up.

In India, the natives make use of large earthen water-pots, which they term *chatties*. These are of the shape of the glass vases in which gold-fish are commonly kept in England. They are lashed together by means of a stout stick, which keeps them about a foot apart. By their aid, a native will cross the widest rivers, for he rests his hands on the stick, and striking out with his feet, goes on without any great fatigue or chance of sinking. Another aid to crossing the water is a water-bag, termed *mussuck*. This is, in reality, an air-bag, when used for this purpose. It is formed out of a goat's skin, is filled with air, and two being tied together, serve as floats.

Wide rivers may be crossed by the aid of 'rafts' or 'flying bridges.' The first of these is constructed of any buoyant material, and varies in size according to the weight it is required to bear. If the raft be made of wood, the lightest and best for the purpose, after cork, is white pine. Several woods are not buoyant enough to float in water, and are therefore unfit for the construction of rafts, for a raft is unlike a vessel or boat; the buoyancy derived from a raft is merely due to the difference in the specific gravity between water and the wood of which the raft is constructed; whereas a vessel, in consequence of its hollow form, displaces a quantity of water, and thus even an iron ship floats, whereas iron would not be suitable, for the construction of a raft. Boxwood, ebony, lignum-vite, vine, pomegranate, Indian cedar, and heart of oak, are all unsuitable for this purpose, in consequence of their great specific gravity.

In order that we may be able to construct a raft which should support any required weight, and yet not waste our materials, we should proceed as follows: measure the timber of which the raft is to be constructed, and find how many cubic feet it contains; weigh a foot of the timber, and find how much this weighs. Now, as water weighs, on an average, sixty-two and a half pounds per cubic foot, or one thousand ounces, we can find how much surplus weight our raft would bear. Suppose, for example, that we had at our command some white pine from which to make a raft; and that we wished to

float over a river a fowling-piece, some gunpowder, a saddle, and provisions, altogether weighing one hundred and fifty pounds. White pine weighs about twenty-five pounds the cubic foot; so that each cubic foot of pine would just float about thirty-seven pounds of goods—that is, sixty-two and a half, less twenty-five, gives about this value for the buoyant power of the pine. Five cubic feet of pine-wood would therefore keep afloat our goods, for this would give us a buoyancy of one hundred and eighty-five pounds. In order, however, to allow for the pine becoming heavier in consequence of remaining in the water, and also to keep our goods well above water, a little additional buoyancy ought to be secured by means of a few more cubic feet. If cork had been used instead of pine, we should have required only three and a half feet (cubic), because the specific gravity of cork is only fifteen pounds per cubic foot, so that each foot would have a floating capacity of about fifty pounds.

We have mentioned one item in the preceding explanation, which may be a puzzle to many of our readers, that is, how to find the number of cubic feet in a piece of timber. For a rough approximation, we may adopt the following plan: measure the mean girth of the piece of timber, which we will suppose to be twenty-five inches; divide this by five, and we obtain five inches as a quotient; then square this number, and we obtain twenty-five; then multiply this twenty-five by twice the length of the log, and we obtain the number of cubic inches: thus, in concise terms, we should say—square one-fifth of the mean girth, and multiply this by twice the length.

We have spoken of crossing the water by means of a 'flying-bridge,' and this is a very excellent method when we have once possession of a boat or a good raft. A flying-bridge is formed by means of one of these, which is securely fastened to a rope or chain, the other end of which is attached to a stout mooring in the stream. The boat is steered in such a manner that the greatest effect is obtained from the combined forces of the mooring-chain and the action of the stream. According to the strength of the current, so one or more 'stations' may be required; and if the current vary in velocity at different parts of the stream, the mooring should be placed on the side near which the current is the strongest. When a river is very wide, two or more moorings will also be required; these are placed at certain distances, and an additional post or posts at points to which the boat may be steered; one chain is then hooked on to the post, and the second chain secured to the boat, which then starts on in its new circular course, and reaches the opposite side. Thus it follows a course by this method similar in shape to two *c's* placed one above the other, and at the spot at which they touch, the junction-post is placed. Broad and rapid rivers may thus be crossed without any manual labour on the part of the travellers. This plan is practised on the continent very largely, and may be seen by the traveller who visits Cologne or Ehrenbreitstein.

During military operations, it often becomes necessary to make a bridge which will enable cavalry and artillery to cross a stream. If the river be wide, these are very commonly formed of casks or pontoons. Pontoons are cylindrical vessels closed at both ends, and air-tight. They are about eighteen feet long, and look very like enormous

sausages. They are formed of sheet tin, and are divided into nine water-proof compartments, so that in case a shot should strike the pontoon between wind and water, only the compartment that is struck will admit water, the remaining portion being still buoyant. Rafts are formed with pontoons, two pontoons being lashed together for this purpose; and these being provided in sufficient numbers, a bridge may very readily be thrown across a river, and troops, guns, &c. passed over. Sometimes a sufficient number of rafts to reach across a river are lashed together near the bank; then these being fastened at one end, are allowed to swing round with the stream until they stretch across, when they are there fastened, and held firmly in their places. A very common method, also, is that termed 'booming out;' the bridge in this case is formed on the bank, and each raft is pushed into the water as soon as it is completed; thus one follows the other, and the bridge gradually moves across the stream.

A bridge of casks is by no means uncommon, and as the troops have many provisions sent in casks, such articles are usually found with an army; there is, however, much more leakage with casks than with pontoons, and thus less continued buoyancy; still, upon an emergency, a very good temporary bridge may be made by their aid. Both pontoon and cask bridges are most suitable for crossing very deep rivers.

If a river should be shallow and yet broad, a bridge is commonly made by the aid of what are called 'trestles.' These trestles are props placed at certain intervals across the stream, and are used as supports upon which to place planks or flooring. The trestle is formed by means of one horizontal bar, at each end of which there are two posts, separated at their feet, and which meet in the bar. If the current is not very strong, and these trestles have a good hold in the bed of the river, they will stand firm enough; if otherwise, the lower part is boarded up and filled in with large stones, and then moored firmly.

If a stream be narrow, about twenty or thirty yards across, we may often make use of a common two-wheeled cart to help us to form a foot-bridge. The cart is pushed into the centre of the stream, care being taken that the shafts are held fast by ropes from the shore. As soon as the cart is settled in the centre of the stream, the shafts are drawn into an upright position by means of the ropes, which are then firmly lashed, so that they cannot move; additional ropes then serve to strengthen those first placed, and thus the shafts act as a sort of trestle, and reduce the span of the bridge.

It being in many cases very difficult to obtain timber of sufficient length to reach the whole way across a river, the banks of which we will suppose are high, it is usual to lash several poles together side by side, push these out nearly as far as they will go over the stream, and then place an enormous mass of stones, rocks, and earth on the shore-end; this will enable the poles to have their fulcrum probably nine-tenths of the distance nearer the shore-end than the other. This being done on both sides of the river, there may remain only a small opening between the two portions thus pushed out, which may be planked over by timber of a moderate length. This is technically termed a 'lever-bridge.'

In some parts of the western continents, water is bridged over by means of felling a large tree; the woodmen being very expert, select a tree on the bank, and with their axes cut away until they find that one or two more blows will bring the tree down; these being judiciously administered, the tree falls in the required direction, and the stream is readily crossed over by its aid.

The coita, one of the spider-monkeys, crosses the water in a very ingenious manner. A large party of these creatures having reached a river-bank, and being desirous of crossing over, proceed as follows: One of the strongest selects a suitable branch, around which he twists his tail, and hangs head downwards; number two monkey crawls along the branch, twists his tail round number one, and hangs head downwards also; number three comes after number two; and so on. A long string of monkeys having been thus formed, the lowest, taking advantage of the ground, or anything from which to obtain a purchase, pushes himself out towards the opposite bank. He thus begins to oscillate, and, like a person swinging, he gives a push at the ground each time he passes it, until in his swing he is able to catch hold of a branch belonging to a tree on the opposite bank. Thus is the bridge completed; and by its aid the remainder of the troop pass over the water.

On one occasion, we saw the greater part of the inhabitants of a Kafir village cross a broad river. The men swam, but this they do not accomplish as do Englishmen; a Kafir swims nearly upright, and proceeds by a series of jerks, none of them being fast swimmers. The women and children managed to get over by the aid of the tails of cows and oxen; these they grasped firmly, and as the animals swam well, were dragged over, only half-drowned.

When a stream runs at the bottom of a deep chasm, over which we wish to cross, a very easy method, although one that appears dangerous, is first to have a stout rope made fast on either side, and extending across the chasm; then have a second and smaller rope, which is to be used as a 'tow-rope.' Procure a stout basket, or make a rope-sling, and attach this by a loop to the stout rope; the basket or sling can then be drawn backwards and forwards over the chasm by the aid of persons on either side, and thus any number may cross, one after the other. In all these cases, it is necessary to have plenty of rope, for we must first throw a very light rope across, or even a piece of string attached to an arrow or stone; then by its aid a stouter piece may be drawn over; and so on, until our thickest rope is at length pulled across.

Suspension-bridges are frequently used to enable persons and horses to cross over deep chasms; these are usually made of ropes; but other materials have been employed with advantage. Across the Andes, there was a suspension-bridge formed of hide; it was two hundred and fifty feet long, and would allow of soldiers passing over it, and also of horses, mules, and cattle; when, however, an attempt was made to convey artillery over it, a serious accident was nearly occurring.

One of the most severe trials to which a suspension-bridge can be subjected is the vibration caused by a number of men marching in step; one or two bridges have been broken down in consequence of this proceeding. The Broughton Bridge across the river Irwell, near Manchester, is an example. This

bridge, although apparently very strongly constructed, and having a span of only forty-eight yards, was being passed over by about sixty men, when they suddenly heard a loud noise, and immediately afterwards one side of the bridge fell with a crash into the river. Although several of the men were seriously hurt, no lives were lost.

It is unpleasant to be on a suspension-bridge when it is from any cause in motion; even the Menai Bridge, strongly constructed as it is, vibrates considerably during a storm; and we have more than once had some difficulty in walking straight upon Hungerford Bridge, not in consequence of any potations in which we had indulged, but because the structure itself was in motion from some cause or other.

In the year 1845, a suspension-bridge across the Bure near Yarmouth fell, in consequence of a defect in the welding of two links in the main chains. Several hundred people had assembled on the bridge, and their weight at once found out the weak point in the work.

At Angers, a large suspension-bridge fell in 1850, whilst a battalion of infantry were passing over it, and upwards of two hundred men were killed. It is very difficult to prevent trained soldiers from keeping step; and when there is any movement of a bridge, each person is disposed to step at the same time, so as to keep his footing.

There is a very neat method practised at Basel on the Rhine for crossing the water. A rope is there stretched across from shore to shore, and at some height above the water. On this rope, there are a travelling ring and a rope, to which latter is attached the boat for crossing. The rudder of the boat being properly adjusted, and the rope fastened on the bow, the boatman puts off; the current acting on the vessel, combined with the action of the ropes, causes the boat to move rapidly across the stream; and thus a flying-bridge is obtained with very little labour.

For the purpose of crossing the ditches of fortifications, the Russians invented a very rapid method. They construct a bridge of the proper length, and of rather light yet strong materials; this they place on a large two-wheeled cart, the shafts of which are in rear, and firmly fastened to the under-part of the bridge. At a given signal, a number of men rush towards the ditch, pushing before them the bridge and cart. Upon reaching the ditch, the cart is pitched into it, and the speed sends it nearly midway into the ditch. There being a slight preponderance of weight at the rear-part of the bridge, the fore-part remains elevated, and thus the shafts assume a nearly upright position, whilst the bridge itself is pushed across the ditch; thus the shafts act as supports in the centre, and the cart-wheels serve as the carriage on which the bridge is run along. Some half-dozen of these rapidly pushed forward at the same time would almost enable the besiegers to carry a place by assault, unless the garrison greatly outnumbered them.

When there are no means at our disposal for making a bridge or raft of any description, we may convey heavy vehicles through the water, instead of over it. The guns of an army may be treated in this manner. The most level portions of the river-bed should be chosen for this purpose, and as many buoyant materials as possible attached to the guns, in order to prevent the wheels from sinking deeply

in the bed of the river; for although we may not be able to float our vehicles, still we can prevent them from weighing very heavy in the water. Then, by the aid of long ropes and horses, men, or extemporised capstans, the heavy vehicles may be dragged *through* a river, instead of floated over it.

In times of war, either side is not very particular as to the materials of which they make a bridge. During the Peninsular War, a very good bridge was constructed out of the materials obtained from pulling down a large inn, and also by the aid of a few pine-trees that grew near. The bridge was more than one hundred feet in length, and strong enough to allow vehicles to pass over.

One of the arches of Trajan's Bridge at Alcantara was destroyed by the French, and across this—a distance of seventy feet—a bridge of ropes was constructed by our engineers; thus, in a few hours, communication again was established.

A very famous bridge was constructed also during the Peninsular War across the Aguada, ten miles below Ciudad Rodrigo. It was formed of trestles, was three hundred and ninety-six feet long, and withstood the winter-torrents and attempts of the enemy to destroy it.

In countries where engineers have not yet made permanent bridges, we, as have many others of our acquaintance, have more than once had to wait several days, on account of floods, in order to merely 'cross the water.'

LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.

CHAPTER XXIV.—THE PROCESSION.

At the time of which I write, a dweller in the midlands who wanted to go to town, did not drive down to the nearest railway station, to be transported from thence by the fiery dragon to his destination. Railways had been long heard of, and indeed there was one within twenty miles of Fairburn, which we should now call a tramway only, for engine it had none. Locomotives were the subject of debate in scientific circles, and of scorn among the rest of the community. A journey such as that my tutor and myself were about to undertake, is scarcely to be understood by readers of the present generation. Not only did it consume an amount of time which would now suffice for six times the distance, but it was surrounded by difficulties and dangers that have now no existence whatever—'extinct Satans,' as a writer calls them, who is now scarcely held to be 'modern,' but who at that time had never written a line. The coach for which Mr Long had thought it advisable not to wait, had met in its time with a thousand-and-one strange casualties, and the guard was a very Scheherazade at relating them. The *Highflyer* had come to dreadful grief in racing with an empty stomach, but many 'outsides,' against its rival, the *Rapid*, which traversed a portion of the same road. It had often to open both its doors, to let the water through, in crossing Crittenden Ford, by neglect of which precaution upon one occasion, four 'insides' had the misfortune to be suffocated. It had been dug out of snow-drifts a hundred times, and now and then it had *not* been dug out, and the passengers had been frost-bitten. In winter, it was usual enough for them to spend a day or two perforce at some country inn, because the roads were 'not open.' The *Highflyer* had once been attacked by a

tiger (out of a travelling caravan), which killed the off-leader; but this was an exceptional adventure. It was attacked by highwaymen at least once a year, but in this respect was considered to be rather a fortunate coach. Only a few weeks previously, there had been found by the reapers, in one of Farmer Arable's wheat-fields, mail-bags with letters containing many thousand pounds in drafts and bills, which had been taken by gentlemen of the road from the custody of the guard of the *Highflyer* in the early summer. These persons had gone into the standing wheat to divide their booty, and left there, what was to them unavailable property, or too difficult to negotiate.

In the two trips I had already taken to the metropolis, I had gone by this curious conveyance, of which all Fairburn had something to say; but I was now to journey even more gloriously still: so thoroughly had Mr Long got to be convinced that some immediate danger was imminent to Marmaduke at the hands of his uncle, that he could not bear the least unnecessary delay in giving him warning. We posted with four horses, and generally at full gallop. I agree with the Great Lexicographer in thinking that sensation very pleasurable indeed. The express-train, it is true, goes five times as fast, but you do not feel that there is any credit due to the steam-horse for that; you take it as a matter of course, and would do so, no matter what exertions it should make for you, short of bursting. But when you heard the ring of the sixteen hoofs upon the iron road, and the sharp crack of the whips in the frosty air, or leaned out of the window for a moment, and beheld the good steeds smoking in your behalf, you said to yourself, or to your companion, if you had one: 'This is wonderful fine travelling.' Perhaps you contrasted such great speed with that attained by the Exeter flying-coaches in your ancestors' time, and smiled with contemptuous pity at their five miles an hour, stoppages excluded. The trees and hedges flew by you then, and gave an idea of velocity, such as the telegraph-posts, seen vanishing thin out of the window of a railway carriage, fail to convey; while, when you stopped for new cattle, the hurry and bustle attendant on the order, 'Horses on,' helped to strengthen the belief in your own fast travelling. Still, after the first few hours, even the enjoyments of a post-chaise-and-four begin to pall; and long before we had approached our destination, I was cramped, and chilled, and tired enough. It was growing dark too, so that there was little to be seen without, and we had passed those dangerous parts of the road where expectations of possible highwaymen had afforded me some excitement. I was dozing dreamily, unconscious that the light of London was flaring like a dusky dawn in front of us, and that indeed we had already entered its then limits upon the north-east, when I was roughly roused by the sudden stoppage of the carriage, accompanied by wild cries, and a glare of lurid flame. Mr Long had put down the window, and was leaning out of it. There was a dense fog, and gas had not yet been established in that part of London; but a vast assemblage of people were streaming slowly past us, and many of them had torches in their hands. They took no notice of us whatever, but yelled and shouted, and every now and then cast glances behind them at some approaching spectacle, which seemed to be

about to overtake us. Presently, we beheld this ourselves. First came a great number of constables, marching twenty abreast, and clearing all before them with large staves; then a body of the mounted patrol—a corps then but newly formed, and which, although now well-nigh extinct, was destined in its time to do good service; then more constables; then a vast quantity of horsemen, armed and unarmed, and lastly This: Extended on an inclined platform, built to a considerable height upon an open cart, was the body of a dead man; it was attired in blue trousers, and with a white and blue striped waistcoat, but without a coat. On the left side of him was a huge mallet, and on the right a ripping chisel.

'Great Heaven! what is this?' inquired Mr Long of one of the mounted constables.

'Oh, it's him, sir, sure enough; we've got him at last,' returned the officer.

'Him? Who?' cried I, half stupified with fatigue and horror. 'Have they found Sir Massingberd?'

No, it was not Sir Massingberd. The face which was now being slowly carried past us was wicked and stern enough, but it was not *his* face. The skin was black, the eyes were projecting; it was plain that the poor wretch had been strangled. The excitement of those who caught sight of it was hideous to witness; they cursed and hissed in hate and fury, and battled to get near the cart, that they might spit upon the corpse which it contained. The force of the advancing crowd was so tremendous that we were compelled to move for some distance side by side with this appalling sight, and presently immediately behind it; there we seemed to fall in as a part of the procession, and were no doubt considered by the majority of persons to officially belong to it. We were borne southwards quite out of our proper direction, and were unable to prevent it, for it was as much as the postillions could do to sit their horses, and avoid being shouldered out of their saddles. Our progress was of course at a foot's-pace only, and twice the procession halted, once opposite a draper's, and once opposite a public-house, when the yells and hooting of the crowd were terrible to hear. Not only were these two houses closely shuttered up (as they well might be), but all the shop-fronts were closed, and the windows and the tops of the houses crowded with spectators. By this time, we had got to know in what dreadful proceedings we were thus taking an involuntary part. The body in the cart was that of the murderer Williams, who had committed suicide two days before, to escape, it was thought, not so much the scaffold, as the execrations of his fellow-creatures. All London was filled with hate of him, as before his capture it had been filled with fear; and the government had caused this public exhibition of his corpse, to convince the minds of the public that the wholesale assassin was really no longer alive. The houses at which we had halted were those which had once been inhabited by his unhappy victims, the Marrs and the Williams. Subsequently, the corpse was conveyed to St George's turnpike, and there interred with a stake thrust through the middle of it; but before that frightful ceremony took place, the postillions had managed to extricate us, and we had driven westwards to our destination. Still, I for my part had seen enough, and more than enough, to make that entry of ours into London a thing impossible to forget; and I think it rendered, by association, the

mystery concerning which we had come up to Harley Street, more menacing and sombre than before.

CHAPTER XXV.—AMONG FRIENDS.

We found Marmaduke Heath in a less morbid state of mind than we had expected. The die having been cast—the time given him by Sir Massingberd for his return and so-called reconciliation with that worthy having already elapsed without any action on the part of his uncle, the effect of that 'Captain Swing'-like epistle was slowly wearing off. No one ever revived the matter in his presence, nor, as we have seen, was he permitted even to write upon the subject. Still, he knew that I had been lately communicated with concerning it—for at first the blow had fallen on its object with such force and fulness that those about him had really not liked to let me know the extent of the mischief I might have committed—and he imagined that I had now come up in mere friendly sorrow to cheer and comfort him. As he came out into the dark street on that December evening to give me loving welcome, fresh from that awful procession-scene, I positively looked with terror to left and right, lest some cloaked figure, whom yet we both should recognise, might reach forth an iron arm, and tear him away. It was I who was morbid and unstrung, and not my friend; he strove, I knew, to appear to the best advantage, in good-humour and high spirits, in order that I might have less to reproach myself with.

'My dear old Peter,' cried he laughing, 'how glad I am to see your honest face. Have you brought me any verbal message from my charming uncle, or are you only his deputy-postman? *How* is he—*how* is he?'

I could see, in spite of his light way, that he was curious to have this interrogation answered; but what was I to say? 'I don't know whether he's well or ill,' returned I carelessly, as I stepped into the hall. 'But how is Mr Gerard and Miss?'

'Here is "Miss,"' returned a sweet voice, blithe as a bird's: 'she is excellently well, Peter, thank you. But what a white face you have got! If that is the gift of country air, there is certainly no such cause for regretting our absence from the Dovecot, about which Marmaduke is always so solicitous.'

"Marmaduke" to his face, now!' thought I. I could not prevent my heart from sinking a little, in spite of the life-buoy of friendship. But I answered gallantly: 'There is no air that can wither your roses, Miss Lucy, for the summer is never over where you are.'

'Bravo, Peter,' quoth Mr Gerard, set in the warm glow of the dining-room, which gleamed forth from the open door behind him. 'If he is so complimentary in a thorough draught, what a mirror of courtesy will he be when he gets thawed! Come in, my dear Mr Long; come in to the warm. No east wind ever brought people more good, than this which brings you two to us. Lucy—Ah, that's right; she has gone to order the dinner to be rechauffed. Now, do you travellers answer no man one word, but go make yourselves comfortable—you have your old rooms, of course—and then come down at once to food and fire. Marmaduke, my dear boy, you keep me company here, please; otherwise, you will delay Peter, with your gossip, I know.'

That was a sentence with a purpose in it. If, as Mr Gerard at once guessed, we had come up to

town on business connected with Sir Massingberd, it might be advisable that I should not be interrogated by Marmaduke privately. For my part, I was greatly relieved by it, since I had no desire to be the person to communicate bad tidings—for such I knew he would consider them—to my friend a second time. My spirits had risen somewhat with the warmth of our reception: it is not a little to have honest friends, and welcome unmistakable in hand and voice and eye. There is many a man who goes smoothly through the world by help of these alone, and only at times sighs for the love that but one could have given him, and which has been bestowed by her elsewhere. When I got down into the dining-room, a minute or two before my tutor, I was received by quite a chorus of kind voices—a very tumult of hospitable greeting.

'Warm your toes, Peter—warm your toes; you shall have a glass of sherry worth drinking directly,' cried Mr Gerard, all in a breath.

'Yes, Peter, you and I will have a glass together,' exclaimed Marmaduke eagerly.

'Stop for "the particular"—stop for the green seal; it will be here in a minute,' entreated the host.

'No, no,' returned Marmaduke; 'I must drink his health at once. Cowslip wine, if I drank it with Peter, would be better to me than Johannisberg.'

He had his hand upon her arm, as I entered the room; I was sure of that, although she had gently but swiftly withdrawn it from his touch, as the door opened. How happy she looked; how passing fair with that faint flush! How handsome and bright-faced was dear Marmaduke! How placidly content, like one who draws his happiness from that of others, was the countenance of Harvey Gerard! A picture of domestic pleasure and content indeed, and with three noble figures in it. It was impossible to doubt that two lovers stood before me, and a father who had found a prospective son-in-law, whom he could love as a son. This new relationship had been only established within a very few days, and upon that account, perhaps, it was the more patent. My mischance in the matter of Sir Massingberd's letter, had been the immediate cause of Marmaduke's declaration. She had compassionated him in his troubles, and he had told her in what alone his hope of comfort lay. He had not been sanguine of securing her—who could have been, with such a priceless prize in view!—for not only had he a diffidence in his own powers of pleasing, great and winning as they were beyond those of any man I ever knew, but he feared to find an obstacle to his wishes in her father.

'Dear Mr Gerard,' he had said with his usual frankness, 'I have won your daughter's heart, and love her better than all the world. Still, it is you alone who have her hand to dispose of. She loves and respects you, as never yet was father loved and respected, and this only makes her dearer to me. I feel as much bound in this matter by your decision—O sir, God grant your heart may turn towards me—as she does herself. I dare not tell you what I think of you to your face. The very greatness of my respect for you, makes me fear your rejection of me. I am in one respect at least a weak and morbid man, while your mind is vigorous and strong upon all points. You are in armour of proof from head to heel, whereas there is a joint in my harness open to every blow. I am afraid, sir, that you despise me.'

'I do not despise you, Marmaduke,' Mr Gerard had replied, in his kind grave voice.

'Ah, sir, I know what you would say,' returned the young man with vehemence; 'you pity me; and pity and contempt are twin-sisters. Besides, I am a Heath; you do not wish that blood of yours should mix with that of an evil and accursed race; and, moreover—though that, with a man like you, has, I know, but little weight—I may live and die a pauper.'

'My dear Marmaduke,' Mr Gerard had answered, 'I cannot conceal from you that there are grave objections to your marriage with my daughter, and more especially at present. We need not revert to the last matter you have spoken of, for wealth is not what I should seek for in my son-in-law; even if it were, your alliance would reasonably promise it, and might be sought by many on that account. As for your being a Heath, that you cannot help; and with respect to "blood," there is more rubbish spoken upon that subject by otherwise sensible folk than upon all others put together. Bad example and evil training are sufficient to account for the bad courses of any family, without impeaching their circulating fluids. If your uncle had not happened to be likewise your guardian, in you, my dear young friend, I frankly tell you I should see no fault, or rather no misfortune; but since he has unhappily had the opportunity of weakening and intimidating?'—

'Sir, sir, pray, spare me,' broke in Marmaduke passionately. 'Are you going to say that I am a coward?'

'Heaven forbid, my boy,' replied Mr Gerard earnestly. 'You are as brave as I am, I do not doubt. If I thought you to be what you suggest, I would not parley with you about my darling daughter for one moment; I would say "No" at once. My Lucy wooed by a poltroon!—no, that is not possible. I do not say "No" to you, Marmaduke.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you, sir,' exclaimed the young man with emotion; then added solemnly, 'and I thank God.'

'What I do say, however,' returned Mr Gerard, 'is: "Wait." While your uncle lives, I cannot, under existing circumstances, permit you to be my Lucy's husband. At present, you are only boy and girl, and can well afford to be patient.'

'And when we do marry,' returned Marmaduke gratefully, 'you shall not lose your daughter, sir, but rather gain a son. My home, if I ever have one, shall be yours also. Pray, believe me when I say that you are my second father, for you have given me a new life.'

It really seemed so to him who looked at the sparkling eyes and heightened colour of the speaker, and listened to his tones, so rich with hope and love.

'There is certainly no one so civil as a would-be son-in-law,' replied Mr Gerard good-naturedly. 'I wonder that old gentlemen in my position ever permit them to marry at all.'

And thus it had been settled—as I saw that it had been—only a very little while before our arrival in Harley Street.

'And what brings you good people up to town,' asked Mr Gerard gaily, 'without sending a line in advance, which, even in mercy to the housekeeper, you would surely have done, had not the business been urgent? As to your travelling with four horses,' added our host sily, 'I know so well the

pride and ostentation of the clergy, that I am not the least astonished at your doing *that*, Mr Rector.'

'Truly, sir, now that I find all safe and well,' replied my tutor, 'I begin to think we might have travelled in a less magnificent way; but the fact is, that I felt foolishly apprehensive and curious to tell you our tidings. Sir Massingberd Heath has been Lost since Thursday fortnight, November sixteenth.'

'Lost!' exclaimed Mr Gerard in amazement.

'Lost!' echoed Lucy compassionately.

'Lost!' murmured Marmaduke, turning deadly pale. 'That is terrible indeed.'

'Yes, poor wretched man,' said Lucy quickly; 'terrible to think that some judgment may have overtaken him in the midst of his wickedness—unrepentant, revengeful, cruel.'

'That is truly what should move us most, Miss Gerard,' observed my tutor: 'it is but too probable that he has been suddenly cut off, and that by violence.' Then he narrated all that had happened at Fairburn since the night of Sir Massingberd's disappearance, uninterrupted save once, when Mr Gerard left the room for a few minutes, and returned with another bottle of 'the particular,' which, it seemed, he would not even suffer the butler to handle. Marmaduke sat silent and awe-struck, drinking in every word, and now and then, when a sort of shudder passed over him, I saw a little hand creep forth and slide into his, when he would smile faintly, but not take his eyes off Mr Long—no, not even to reply to hers.

'I think,' added my tutor, when the narrative was quite concluded, 'that under these circumstances, I was justified in coming up to town, Mr Gerard, since it is just possible that Sir Massingberd may, may'—

'That he may not be dead,' interrupted our host gravely; 'there is, of course, that chance; and we must set to work at once to settle that question.'

There was a violent ringing at the front-door bell. Mr Long started up with a 'What's that?' Marmaduke's very lips grew white, and trembled. For my part, I confess I congratulated myself that I was on that side of the table which was furthest from any person who might enter the room. Lucy alone maintained a calm demeanour, and looked towards her father confidently.

'That is Mr Clint, I have no doubt,' observed Mr Gerard quietly. 'I sent word to him an hour ago to come directly, and, if possible, to bring Townshend with him. Whether Sir Massingberd be alive or not, we shall soon discover, for the great Bow Street Runner will be certain to find either his body or his bones.'

THE RULE OF THE KIRK-SESSION IN THE LAST CENTURY.

Few except those who have pored over the musty tomes containing the records of the doings of the inferior ecclesiastical courts in bygone days, can have any idea of the rigid rule exercised so lately as during the last century over the morals, the social habits, and even over the liberties, the persons, and property of Scotch parishioners. In the parish which includes the most northern burgh on the mainland of Scotland, from whose Records the following illustrations are given, the kirk-session during the past century imposed and levied fines for breaches of morality, and

pointed the goods of those that did not pay them; incarcerated contumacious persons, and 'banished' obstinate offenders, and all those who, being unable to produce a 'testificat' from their former parish, were held to be 'suspect'; appointed inspectors of public-houses, and elders to 'survey the town' between sermons, to see that none of the country-people went home before the afternoon service, and that no breach of decorum was committed on the Lord's-day; prohibited marriages on Mondays, and forbade fiddling at 'contracts' and weddings; and actually set a man in the stocks for two hours, with a paper cap on his head, bearing the inscription of his crime, which was the terribly heinous one of 'vilipending' the minister and session. The man, when summoned before them, 'denied the whole,' but 'after proof, was found guilty;' and the session 'ordained him to be carried from the kirk to the cross, with ane paper hood, bearing the inscription of his crime, and to sit there for two hours in the stocks with the hood on his heid.' The particular misdemeanour of which he was accused was simply that he expressed himself regarding the minister and session, in conversation with some persons on the street, in contemptuous terms.

One man was 'conveened' for swearing, and denied the charge, but was found guilty, because, in the heat of the argument, he forgot himself, and swore before the session! He is 'ordered to be incarcerated till he pay his fine of twentie shillings.' Another was fined twenty shillings for swearing, and 'not having paid the same, the session ordains the officers to poynd him.' In another case, a woman was 'delated' for cursing, and confessed she said, 'God's malediction be upon the other person she was scolding withal. She is ordained to pay twenty shillings as her mulct, and stand two days before the congregation, in testimony of her repentance.' 'Seolding' was a frequent charge against women, and if they had been very outrageous, it not unfrequently happened that they were tried and punished both in the kirk-session and in the bailie court of the burgh. In one case, in which a woman of the name of Abernethie had 'maliciously slandered Joan Innes,' the session, 'to prevent any such thing hereafter, doth appoint yat ye said Abernethie doe give a publick acknowledgment of ye samen, and say, "False tongue she lyed." Accordingly, we have it recorded that she did so in the customary sackcloth before the whole congregation next Lord's-day. There are frequent entries of fines for 'cursing,' and orders for incarceration of the parties till their fines, whether for breach of the third or seventh commandments of the decalogue, were paid. Sometimes the man or woman so fined, and ordered to be incarcerated, would find caution to pay the fine within a certain period, in which case they were allowed to go free. In the case of one who 'had not paid his mulct, nor found suretie for the same, the session ordains him to be incarcerated;' and in another, the session taking into their consideration that the man and woman whose case was before them 'were now fallen again, therefore, for non-payment of their mulct, the officers are hereby empowered to seize and apprehend any goods whatsoever that belongs to either party within this parish, and to bring the same to the treasurer.' Perhaps the most curious entry of this kind is the following: 'Fryday ye 3d of October 1701.—Alexr. Lamach and his wife appointed to stand publickly, and for to pay 20 sh. Scots, for the

crime of cursing. Lamach's woman, Eliz. Hendrie, likewise appointed to stand for *gathering of pease!*

There are regular entries of the names of the two elders whose duty it was by turns to 'survey the town on Sabbath-dayes, to take notice of all enormities committed on the said day till next session.' Sometimes the formula is varied, and the two elders are appointed 'to search the town in time of divine worship, and after the same, and to make report of irregular persons to the session.' Again, the session 'appoints ye elders that take up ye collection, that they notice that none go home betwixt sermons, and that they search the change-houses, that there be none entertained there with eal.' Again, on the 12th June 1720, the following curious entry appears on the Records: 'This day ye people of [the burgh] were informed from ye pulpit of ye dangerous consequences of giving *them* ale on ye Lord's-day, and earnestly exhorted to abstain from such practices, under ye pain of incurring church censure.' Notwithstanding these stringent precautions, however, and in spite of the fact that the perambulating elders were continually on the watch for offenders, the practice of 'giving them ale on the Lord's-day' grew and increased, until, about the middle of the century, the session, 'having discussed [on the Lord's-day] several affairs which they did not think proper to engross in their registers,' came to the resolution, in regard to the 'giving of ale,' that the minister should 'give publick intimation next Lord's-day from the pulpit, that whoever, for the time coming, shall be convicted of this horrid prophanation, shall be publicly censured, and delivered up to be punished, *in their persons and otherwise*, by the civil magistrates.'

Carrying water from the well on the Lord's-day was a practice which gave the session much trouble, and sorely taxed their legislative ingenuity. Two women-servants of one of the bailies of the burgh were 'delated for bringing in a tub of water on the Sabbath.' They did not appear, and were fined for obstinacy. When summoned the second time, they appeared, and explained that the water was for a sick cow; whereupon the session appear to have fallen from their proceedings. Another woman, who was summoned for a similar offence, 'confessed that she carried in a drink of water on the Lord's-day. The session, considering that she being a woman of a timorous nature, and that she was big with child, have placed it upon record, that in her case they 'doe think a sessional rebuke sufficient,' and dispense with the public appearance in sackcloth. Failing by every other means to put down the practice, the session hit upon the notable expedient of sending out the kirk-officer every Sunday, with 'orders to take and brake all their vessels, except those who carry in a pint-stoup for the use of sick people.'

Some of the cases of Sabbath-breach which came before the session were very curious, as well as curiously dealt with. One man, after the examination of witnesses, on a charge of this kind, 'being found innocent, *was sharplie rebuked* by the minister, and dismissed.' Another man is charged with 'beating his wife on Sabbath-day.' An elder is 'delated,' and tried for hunting a seal on the Lord's-day, and being found guilty, 'the session thought it fittest, seeing that it was not easie to find another elder in his room, to pass him at a reproof before them.' One man was tried for

'raising wilful fire last Lord's-day, by tying fire to a cat's tail, and sending her out among the corn, where she had burned some and endangered others,' and a woman for gathering dulse and tangles at the shore. The sentence in both cases was, that the culprits should stand in sackcloth at the church-door from the ringing of the second bell till the congregation was convened, thereafter to appear in the ordinary place of repentance, and be rebuked publicly after divine service. Another man was summoned for firing his pistol on the Lord's-day, but made the excuse that it went off by accident as he was 'travelling on the hill, his pistol on his side.' The 'running' of contraband goods on the Lord's-day was not so severely visited, the offenders being very numerous, and often 'men of condition.' In one case, the circumstances are recorded as follow: A man accused of carrying corn to the mill on Sabbath-day compeared, and the case having been gone into, 'it was found that he was *only* returning home with a horse early on Sunday, having been employed in carrying contraband goods.' Cases of breach of fast-days were punished the same as Sabbath-breach, the highest fine recorded being 'twenty shillings, and to go to prison, failing payment.'

Parties owing fines, and not having paid them, even when they had 'given suretie,' were not entitled to 'get the benefit of marriage,' until the fines were paid. In 1709, the session, 'considering the great abuses committed by the confluence of people who frequent contracts' (betrothals), appointed 'that none contract till they come to the minister and find caution that there be *no dancing or music* at the contracts,' and in 1711, it was enacted that, for the better preservation of the sanctity of the Sabbath, 'there be no marriages hereafter upon Monday.' Parties 'contracted,' or publicly betrothed, were fined ten pounds Scots by the session, if they afterwards refused to implement the contract; and persons intending marriage were, after the change of currency, obliged to consign ten shillings in the clerk's hands before publication of the bans. Among other matters of this nature, it is recorded that the session 'sat upon an elder for going and courting here and there several women,' for which he was 'sharplie reprov'd.'

The session not only prohibited music and dancing at 'contracts,' but at other times and places as well. In 1758, a 'joiner in the town,' who had a taste for 'practising on the fiddle at unseasonable hours,' and who also kept good ale, was ordered to 'dismiss all his company that may be convened for dancing or drinking in his house, precisely after the piper has finished his round in the town, which is always about ten o'clock, with certification that if he does not, he'll be prosecuted and fined.' But more than this, so lately as 1787, on a petition and complaint from the kirk-session, the magistrates of the burgh passed an enactment, by which 'they did, and hereby do enact, that in time coming every householder within the burgh who keeps disorderly houses for dancing, drinking, &c., shall, on a complaint to the magistrates, either from the kirk-session or the procurator-fiscal of the burgh, be lyable in the sum of ten pounds Scots each, *toties quoties*; that each musician and pyper who shall take it upon him to play at such meetings shall forfeit the sum of six pounds Scots for each trespass; that no public dances are to be allowed within the burgh, except Christmas-day and

New-year's Day, and that only to continue till ten o'clock each night, under the penalty of twelve pounds Scots money, to be paid by each musician and pyper who shall pretend to play after that hour!

That ancient instrument of exposure for evil-doers, the 'cock-stool,' was in use within the eighteenth century, as the Records of this parish shew. The session wanted the town to 'put up ane cock-stool' in the second year of the century, and the town refusing to be at the expense of its erection, the session ordered a joiner in the town to 'make ane cock-stool;' and half-a-dozen years thereafter, there is an account for the 'mending of the cock-stool.' The 'stocks' in the market-place have been already mentioned as having been also used by the kirk-session within the last century. It is on record also, that in 1701, ane 'Jannett Moore, a person suspect of *sorcerie*,' was appointed by the session 'to be banisht the place.' The way they dealt with those who were 'suspect' of immorality is forcibly illustrated by the case of a woman in 1702. The minister received a 'line' from the minister of a neighbouring parish, 'desiring' that a certain woman, then residing in the burgh, should be sent to the session of the neighbouring parish 'to satisfie for what is laid to her charge there.' On receipt of the line, the session of the parish in which the woman is resident 'ordains the officer to incarcerate her, for fear of running away some other way, and to be sent to-morrow' to the parish where she was wanted.

In 'cases of scandal,' as they are called, the general punishment was a fine, with which the rich escaped; but the poor were compelled to stand before the congregation in sackcloth in the 'place of repentance,' and be publicly rebuked, the number of appearances varying with the aggravation of the offence. It is recorded of one woman that she 'stood' for the seventeenth time. It is also stated that as the session, owing to the number of delinquents, 'could not be expected' to know the number of times each person stood, it would be necessary to appoint some of the elders to take note and keep count of them every Sabbath. They had a way of proving the paternity of illegitimate children which seems to have been at once ingenious and effective, despite its barbarity. The midwife invariably refused to 'help the mother in her pangs' till she should be told in presence of witnesses 'whose child it was that she was to bring into the world.' Her evidence was always considered important by the session. In cases of first-born children of married parents, when the session thought the child had come too soon, there was a deputation of two elders and 'skilly women' appointed to examine the child, and report whether or not it was premature. In cases in which it was considered necessary, the accused was required publicly to take the 'Oath of Purgation,' and to 'imprecate upon himself the following plagues,' if guilty: 'That I may be a vagabond like Cain upon the earth; that some signall judgement from God may be inflicted upon my bodie, even here on earth; and that I may be deprived of the presence of God for evermore hereafter; and that all the curses that are denounced against sin in the Scriptures may fall upon me.' Such were the fearful and blasphemous terms in which a man or woman who had been 'fyled' by the tongue of scandal was obliged, for the 'more

verification of the truth and satisfaction of all,' to establish his or her innocence.

The tariff to be paid to the session-clerk and the kirk-officer, which was over and above the fines leviable by the session, was as follows: 'The session-clerk shall have four shillings for each baptism, and twelve shillings for each marriage, and seven shillings for each testimony; further, that each fornicator pay to the clerk two shillings of compearance-money, each relapse a grott, and so gradually, each adulterer sixpence, and finally, every scandalous person called before the session pays two shillings Scots.' Besides this, the kirk-officer had three-and-fourpence for each citation of any delinquent, 'which, if they deny to pay, the officer is empowered to poynd them'—which he was not slow to do, if we judge from the fact, that the session found it necessary to rebuke him for 'unjustly taking a petticoat from a delinquent.'

Such is a hasty sketch of the rule of the kirk-session in a northern parish during the eighteenth century. After this energetic and peculiar fashion, the elders cultivated the corner of the vineyard over which they had been made overseers, and not less curious and suggestive than their *modus operandi* was the reward they reserved for themselves when their labours were over. In 1744, the 'elders in session enacted, that in consideration of their labours throughout the parish, whenever any of them shall die, he shall be entitled to the benefit of the bell and the best mortcloth without any charge to his heirs or executors.'

THE SORROWS OF GREATNESS.

THERE were six of us, an agreeably varied assortment of boys and girls, of whom I was the youngest. My worthy father had a custom of measuring the stature of his growing family once a year. It was a solemn ceremony. Dressed in our best clothes, and with our heads rasped to a preternatural smoothness by nurse's uncompromising hair-brush, we were marshalled in the paternal dressing-room. Well do I remember that apartment. It was pervaded by a penetrating odour of boot-leather. Rows of boots met the eye in every direction. In those days I used to wonder why my father had only two legs; I fancied he should have been a centipede; but I have since learned that he never had a corn in his life, and that he attributed his immunity to the fact of never wearing a pair of new boots for more than two hours at a stretch. Enough of boots; I did not take up my pen to write of them, but of my miserable self. Let me proceed with my allotted task.

I was five years old on the first measuring-day of which I can recall a distinct memory. Bidding me remove my shoes, my father gently placed my head against the dressing-room door, which was scored over with pencil notices of names, dates, and heights. He applied his infallible four-foot rule.

'Bless me, Bella!' he exclaimed, addressing my mother, 'this boy is growing prodigiously. Six inches in the twelvemonth! He is already taller than you, Lizzy, who are three years older; and he will soon be up to your pencil-line, Master Bob. Yes, Bella,' continued my father, smiling and rubbing his hands—for, being a small man himself, he was proud of my increasing stature—'yes, Bella, David will out-top us all.'

Hitherto Bob and I had been a loving pair of brothers, but the ordeal of measurement aroused his jealousy. The privileges of elder birth were invaded by my growing propensities. He began to be irritable. He was perpetually placing his back against mine, for the purpose of comparing heights, and would on these occasions viciously bump our heads together. As his skull was incomparably the thickest, I fared the worse from these collisions.

I soon became an object of public remark.

'What fools some parents are!' exclaimed one gentleman to another in the street; 'look at that great lubberly boy in a tunic and bare legs, still hanging on to his nurse's apron-string. Why, he is nearly old enough to be leaving school.'

The gentleman did not know the character of my nurse, Mrs Crossley; she reddened with anger, and turning sharp on her heel, addressed him thus: 'So you know when the child was christened, do you, Mr Poke-your-nose-into-other-people's-business?'

'I suppose about fourteen years ago,' replied the gentleman, somewhat abashed.

'You're wrong, Mr Impudence, and I'll thank you not to make insulting speeches in the public thoroughfares, or the New Police'—the police and the General Post-office were both styled new in those days—'may have something to say to you. This blessed lamb is not seven yet, as his pa and ma can testify.'

'Why, he is a monster!' exclaimed the gentleman's companion, an insolent red-faced fellow in a blue satin scarf—'a perfect monster! Not seven yet! You should put him in a show.'

I was a sensitive boy, and at these harsh words I began to weep. Mrs Crossley was furious, and shook her umbrella in the faces of the foe.

'You call yourselves men, and come here to mock and jeer at a poor infant who is as heaven has made him, and can't diminish a cupid of his own stature. Shame on you! you deserve to be pelted through the town, you mean, cruel creatures, you!'

As the crowd who had assembled, though entirely ignorant of the cause of offence, sympathised strongly with Mrs Crossley, the two gentlemen beat a hasty retreat.

But I had not always Mrs Crossley to defend me, and the street-boys of our neighbourhood made my life miserable by dancing a sort of *Carmagnole* round me to the following words: 'O my! O my! O my! seven years old and six foot high; O would I be sich a reglar Guy!'

Six foot high was a huge exaggeration. Still matters were dismal enough. On my eighth birthday I was privately measured by my father; he found that I was five feet four, or half an inch taller than himself. His face became grave.

'When a boy of eight, Bella, out-tops his father,' he said at the dinner-table, 'something must be done.'

'But what?' demanded my mother, with an anxious look.

'Procrustes!' sniggered Bob, as he sat waiting for his pea-soup to cool.

'Leave the room, sir!' thundered my father, 'and take your dinner with you. I'll permit no unfeeling jests.'

'Who was Procrustes?' asked my mother.

'A person of lawless propensities, my dear, with an extreme passion for uniformity. Ha!' exclaimed

my father, suddenly striking his forehead, like Handel, 'I have an idea. It shall be carried out at once.'

I was sent to a country school, where, on my arrival, the head-master addressed me in these words: 'My boy, it is your father's wish that you should call yourself fourteen years old.' The effect of this pious fraud was, that instead of being regarded as a rather intelligent child of my age, I was looked upon as a babyish hobbledohoy. My muscles were flaccid and undeveloped, so that I was useless at cricket; my unwieldy size (for I was thick as well as tall) prevented my achieving success at prisoner's base, and my sympathies naturally led me to seek companionship among my real equals in age, the smallest boys in the school. They, however, rejected my advances with fear and repulsion, just as a chirping brood of sparrows would shrink at the intrusion of a young rook. Despised by the elder boys, and dreaded by the younger, I wandered solitarily about the playground, immersed in bitter reflection. But, unfortunately, grief did not stop my growth. Year after year, as I came home for the midsummer and Christmas holidays, my father regarded my increasing stature with a face of painful astonishment. He hardly had the heart to measure me, especially as he was soon compelled to mount a stool for the purpose. Bob no longer dared to bully me. He was awed by my monstrous presence. Nurse Crossley, who had retired on half-pay, and took in plain needlework at an adjoining cottage, was still pleased to see me; but even she began to regard me with a face of apprehension. She grieved me bitterly one day by saying: 'Master Davy, your parents, being small, which your pa is but a few inches off a dwarf, I begin to be feared that you, or lestways what ought to be you, was changed at nuss!'

At fourteen, I had attained the height of six feet two inches; my schoolfellows believed that I was twenty, and wondered I did not leave Poplar House Academy. They taunted me with effeminacy, and laughed at my shrill voice, which still piped in childish treble. I must mention that I was not an ill-looking fellow. My figure, though clumsy, was not deformed; my features were good; my complexion was clear and healthy. But as I grew older and bigger, I became more and more sensitive. I withdrew myself as much as possible from the view of my fellow-creatures. There was a private path (accessible only by the schoolmaster's key) leading from our playing-field to a sluggish stream, bordered with pollarded willows. On the margin of this miniature river I used to sit for hours, with my long legs dangling over the water, watching the swallows as they swooped down on their prey, or the rats, as they swam cautiously from bank to bank with only their noses above water. Here I would remain in a state of negative happiness till the sun had set, and the bats flew in circles round and round the hollow trees. One evening, I had just looked at my watch (having been endowed with that dignified appendage in consideration of my size several years before), and was reflecting with a sigh that I must quit my solitary retreat, and mingle once more in the din and merriment of the school-room, when a hand was laid softly on my shoulder. I turned my head, and beheld the face of a man whom I had seldom seen, though I had often heard his name mentioned.

Mr Leverton was the recluse of the village. He scarcely ever stirred out of his house, which was situated on the banks of the river, saw no company, never went to church, and spent most of his time in fishing. As he was a strict preserver, and my schoolfellows had often trespassed on his waters, I fancied he deemed me one of the culprits, and was about to execute summary vengeance on my person; but I was speedily undeceived by the mildness of his address.

'My young friend,' he said, 'I have watched you for some time past. As I stand, rod in hand, at yonder bend of the river, I can see you through the trees. Like me, you are fond of solitude. Consequently, there is a natural sympathy between us. Now, what do you think about?'

'About giants.'

'Giants! That is a strange subject of contemplation.'

'I think to myself, shall I become a giant?' said I with a blush.

'Nonsense, why you must have done growing. How old are you?'

I thought of my father's strict injunction, and of the deceit which had been successfully maintained for the last six years, and replied with some hesitation:

'I am twenty, sir.'

'Too old for school. What can your parents be thinking of! At your age, I was battling with the world. Come, you shall sup at my house.'

'I am afraid Mr Wickham will object, sir.'

'I have his permission. See here,' said Mr Leverton, displaying a paper, 'in black and white. If you wish for comfort in this villainous world, have everything in black and white. Read it.'

'Mr Leverton has Mr Wickham's permission to invite Mr David Elworthy to his house whenever he pleases.'

'Are you satisfied?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then come along.'

The recluse unlocked a gate studded with spikes and interlaced with brambles which led to his own property. He preceded me at a swift pace, the decisive abruptness of which corresponded with his manner of speaking; and as soon as we reached the house—a small but picturesque edifice, completely screened from view by evergreen foliage—he unlocked the front-door with a latch-key, and pushed me into the hall.

Pointing to another door, he said: 'Go in there, and wait till I come.' I opened the door and went in. To my astonishment, a figure rose up at my entrance, a female figure. I felt utterly abashed. I was entirely unaccustomed to ladies' society, and here I was face to face with a pretty young lady. Excepting sisters (who count for nothing), my intercourse with the fair sex had been hitherto limited to my mother and nurse Crossley. I stood in the middle of the room, blushing red-hot to the ears, gasping for breath, and twirling a chair by way of employing my hands. I cannot describe the young lady from what I saw at that juncture. I saw a cloud of white with a fascinating face at the top of it, and that is all. I don't know how long I stood in this ridiculous posture: it might be two minutes, but it felt like forty, when I was brought to my senses by a soft voice saying: 'Pray, be seated, Mr Elworthy.'

My face grew hotter than ever at the sound of my

own name, and I selected the slenderest chair in the room, one of those elegant ornamental articles with spiral legs and a feeble back, which are not meant to be sat upon. On this fragile piece of workmanship I cautiously deposited my bulky person.

'Are you not tired of school, Mr Elworthy?'

'Oh no, not at all—that is, yes I am.'

After this contradictory speech, I was all blush from the soles of my feet to the summit of my head. I felt like a red cabbage.

'You do not play at games, I think?'

'No, miss; that is, I don't play at—at any games.'

A fresh burst of blushing followed this brilliant speech, while my chair creaked in a terribly threatening manner. I was too shy, however, to move to one that was more substantial, and prayed inwardly that Mr Leverton might soon appear.

'Are you fond of reading?'

'Very, miss.'

'Here is a book that you may like to look at,' said the young lady rising. Natural politeness caused me to rise also to save her the trouble of crossing the room, but at that moment Mr Leverton burst in abruptly, and I plumped back into my chair like a guilty thing.

The shock was too much for that frail piece of furniture. It uttered one dying squeak, and collapsed beneath my weight. I found myself among the ruins on the floor.

A smile passed over the young lady's face; but she restrained herself at once, and looked sorry and concerned. I loved her from that moment. She evidently saw how miserably nervous I was, and would not for an instant pain me by appearing to laugh at my disaster.

'There,' said Mr Leverton, assisting me somewhat roughly to my feet—'there, Emily, that's your doing. Who but a fool would put a stout young man into that gimcrack affair? However, I'm glad it's broken. I hate shams, and a chair which is not meant to be sat in is an organised sham. Come, we'll have supper. David, give my daughter your arm. Oh, I forgot, you've not been introduced. Mr David Elworthy, my daughter Miss Leverton.'

The supper consisted of a dish of perch, a Dutch cheese, and a jug of home-brewed ale. Nature has gifted me with a tolerable appetite, and after our school-fare of sinewy mutton and stringy beef, I found the fish delicious. The malt liquor inspired me with courage. I began to feel at my ease, and ventured to examine my host's countenance. He was a tall bony man, with black straight hair flecked with gray, and features which, but for their harshness, would have been handsome. I then glanced shyly at his daughter. She had inherited her father's features, but their stern outlines were softened down to the most feminine delicacy. Her hair was chestnut-brown, glossy and abundant; her eyes were gray, her nose was straight, her mouth full of expression. As for her neck and shoulders, I have since studied statuary, and never saw any sculptured forms more beautifully rounded.

Suddenly, as I was gazing open-mouthed on this lovely vision, I became aware that her father was watching me keenly. I hastily withdrew my eyes and directed them to the table-cloth, blushing like beet-root.

'Do you want any more supper, David?' he asked, after a few moments' pause.

'No, sir, thank you.'

'Then take your hat, and be off!'

Feeling sure that I had committed some terrible *faux-pas*, I was about to rush from the room, when Mr Leverton shouted: 'What! won't you say good-night?'

He offered me a hard dry hand to shake. I made a clumsy bow to Miss Leverton.

'What, David,' he exclaimed, 'shake hands with the father and only bow to the daughter! That won't do!'

Miss Leverton offered her hand. The pressure of that soft palm sent an electric thrill, half-pleasurable, half-painful, all up my arm.

Her father then pushed me in a rough, good-humoured way out of the house, and locked the door after me, saying: 'Go straight home, David. No more ponderings to-night on the river bank!'

I slept indifferently. Strange visions disturbed my rest. Emily Leverton, seated on a side-saddle, rode an enormous perch, which hovered over my bed; then her father appeared, armed with a Dutch cheese, which he flung at my head. I awoke with a cry of fear.

'Ah! you may well sing out, Master Grampus; and I'll send another at your head if you do it again!'

'It was Tubbs who spoke, a ferocious bullying boy. He sat up in bed, looking most truculent, with his night-cap cocked over his left ear. He brandished a slipper in his hand.

'Do what?' I asked in my absurd treble voice.

'Do what?' said Tubbs, mimicking my shrill speech. 'Do what? Why, snore. You've been snoring loud enough to wake old Wickham.'

'Have I? I'm sorry for it.'

'Do it again, and you'll get this slipper, and a "cold pig" into the bargain,' growled the bully, composing himself to sleep, for it was barely five o'clock.

This was a melancholy awakening. I never loathed Poplar House Academy so much as I did that morning. I tried to go to sleep again, and dream of the big perch, with its fair rider; but fear of 'cold pig'—I was not gifted with personal courage—kept me awake till it was time to get up.

I repaired more diligently than ever during the next few days to my river-side haunt, partly to escape from the inquisitiveness of my companions, who wanted to know why that fish-preserving hunks old Leverton had invited me to supper.

'I know why,' piped a small youth of nine, about the height (metaphorically) of sixpenny-worth of halfpence. 'I know why. He wants Goliath to marry his daughter.'

The handsomest and tallest boy in the school—his head just reached my chin—immediately boxed the little urchin's ears, saying, as he placed his hand on his hip and ran his fingers through his light curls, 'I flatter myself she could choose better.' Poor Goliath blushed scarlet, and slunk away to the river.

I had not the least idea then—such an innocent was I—what was the matter with me, but I have since discovered that I, the overgrown boy of fourteen, was in love with Emily Leverton. I broke both the large and small blade of my pocket-knife, trying to carve E. L. on one of the old willows. I attempted to make rhymes to her name, but I could think of none but Everton, which smacked of toffee. I tried to catch a

glimpse of her father, but was unsuccessful. I now and then observed the top-joint of his fishing-rod peeping through the trees, but though he must have seen me, he shewed no signal of recognition.

A fortnight of anxious expectancy passed away; I was waiting as usual by the river for the school supper-bell to ring, when again a hand was laid on my shoulder. Although I had anticipated the touch of those fingers for thirteen successive evenings, I started as convulsively as if Mr Leverton had put a frog down my back.

'Nervous, eh?' said he. 'We shall cure that. It is not good for man to be alone. Let me see,' he continued, stroking his chin contemplatively. 'Twenty years old. Then you will be twenty-one next birthday!'

'Yes, sir,' I murmured, feeling what a falsehood was wrapped up in this seeming truism. 'On the ninth of September.'

'Hum—ha,' said Mr Leverton. 'Supper waits for you.'

Again a dish of fish, Dutch cheese, and ale. I was less shy this time; I began to talk, and told my host all about my family. Emily looked lovely in her simple white muslin. After supper, at her father's bidding, she opened the pianoforte, and sang a few songs. I was in the seventh heaven, and the singer was St Cecilia. Her father broke the spell. 'Come,' he said, looking at the clock; 'tis time to go; I will walk with you.'

As soon as we were outside the house, he spoke thus, as if in soliloquy: 'Twenty-one in September; he will do admirably. Gentle, innocent, and pliable; I shall mould him like wax. Instead of losing a daughter, I shall gain a son. David, you shall marry Emily!'

I stood in the moonlight with my mouth wide open, looking, I suspect, like a gigantic baby.

'Sir!' I stammered.

'Wouldn't you like to marry her?'

'Yes.'

'Very well, then that is settled. In the midsummer holidays I shall come and talk to your father about it, David. Till then,' he said sternly, 'silence. Good-night.'

After this conversation, I was frequently invited to Mr Leverton's abode. We did not always have fish for supper; still, frugality was the rule of the household. I had overcome my shyness with the recluse, and in his company conversed pretty freely; but alone with Emily, I sat as mum as a stock-fish. My attempts at courting consisted in turning over the leaves of her music-book, invariably at the wrong moment. I doubt if Jeanie Deans thought the Laird of Dumbiedikes as dull as Emily must have found me. I began to fancy, too, that the young lady's manner had grown frigid and constrained; I saw a furtive tear occasionally start from her eyelid. What did it mean?

I went home for the midsummer holidays, and found myself confronted by a sad calamity. My dear father, who had so often measured others, died suddenly, and was himself measured—for his coffin. Shortly after his funeral, the will was read. He had been a prosperous professional man, and had saved money. After providing for my mother and sisters, and leaving the business to my elder brothers, my name was mentioned: 'To my beloved son David, I leave the sum of five thousand pounds, to be held in trust for his benefit until he attains his majority.'

As I listened to these words with feelings of tearful gratitude for my father's considerate kindness, I felt a gentle pressure of the arm. I looked round, and saw Mr Leverton.

'Don't be alarmed,' he whispered; 'I came in with your solicitor, an old friend of mine. I want a word with you in private.'

He had such a commanding way with him, that I accompanied him at once to the garden.

'David,' he exclaimed, 'this is glorious. I don't refer to your poor father's death. I am sorry for it, but it is the common lot. I speak of yourself. In two months you will be your own master, and may, if you please, become my son-in-law. Emily has come with me to London. Here is our address. Call and see us.'

Such is the power of continuous falsehood, that I had really begun to believe myself six years older than I actually was, and I think the self-deception had tended to give me the feelings of manhood. Still, I knew that I was an impostor. And what would my mother and sisters say when they heard of Emily? Above all, what would Bob say? He would scorch me with ridicule. I hesitated about calling on the Levertons, when, a few days later, I received a letter, written, to my astonishment, by Emily herself, demanding an immediate interview. It was the first time I had seen her handwriting, and I kissed that precious piece of paper till it was quite crumpled and dog-eared. With a palpitating heart I induced my best surtout (I had long worn 'tails,') put on a spotless pair of lavender gloves, and carried a Malacca cane; in short, but for my treble voice, I was to all intents and purposes a tall, stout young man of twenty, instead of a boy-giant.

I found Emily alone. Her father, she said, had gone into the City. She looked pale and anxious, traces of tears were in her eyes. After making some absurdly confused remarks on the state of the weather, I collapsed as to conversation. Miss Leverton then addressed me thus: 'Mr Elworthy, I wish to speak with you seriously. In the first place, do you know why my father leads such a retired life?'

'No,' I murmured.

'Then I will tell you. He was once a rich man, but a neighbour of ours, Mr Maverley, persuaded him to embark his fortune in a speculation which proved ruinous. Mr Maverley lost all his own property as well, but my father refused to forgive him on that account. He persisted in regarding him as a designing knave; and withdrawing from the world, with the wreck of his property, became the recluse you have seen. Mr Maverley is dead, but his son lives; and that son, Mr Elworthy, in happier days, was my affianced lover.'

A blush suffused my face, but it was the blush of disappointment, not of shyness. I instantly hated this young Maverley. He was coming between me and my cherished hopes. Had I been the Giant Blunderbore (according to the popular view of that worthy), I should have locked him up in my castle-larder, and made bread of his bones. I must have looked quite fierce, for Emily said: 'You seem affected, Mr Elworthy.'

'No,' I replied, gasping like a fish in her father's landing-net. 'No, Miss Leverton, not at all.'

This was a tremendous falsehood, but Emily continued quietly: 'After his father's death, Edward Maverley went to Canada. Five years of

steady industry have rewarded him with prosperity. He again seeks my hand—but my father hates him, and has determined that I shall marry you to insure his disappointment. Mr Elworthy, I respect you, but I cannot love you as I love Edward Maverley—I have known him from infancy. We were playmates before we could speak. But my father is a stern, inflexible man. He has taught me to regard his will as law. I dare not oppose him, unless—unless you will release me.'

Until that moment, I did not know how much I loved Emily Leverton. You may laugh, and say it was calf-love, for she was certainly ten years older than myself; still, I did love her, deeply—sincerely. Not knowing what to say, I gasped once more.

At this moment, there was an authoritative knock at the street-door. 'Papa!' exclaimed Emily.

I nervously caught up my hat and cane, and essayed to depart.

'Stay, stay, I implore you!' she cried, taking my hand between her own. (To this day, I preserve the right-hand lavender-glove, which her pretty fingers pressed, as a sacred relic.) 'Be kind, be generous, and release me; nay, do not merely release me, but speak a word for Edward.'

This was selfish and inconsiderate of Emily; but then love is selfish and inconsiderate. Jack, the eternal enemy of giants, was in my power. I was not only entreated to restore him his shoes of swiftness and sword of sharpness, but also to give him my castle. It was too bad.

Mr Leverton entered the room.

'Holloa, David!' he said. 'Paying your promised visit, eh? That's right. But Emily, what's the matter?' he continued abruptly, while a black look passed over his face. 'Crying? what about?'

'A conversation I have had with Mr Elworthy.'

'The subject?'

'Edward Maverley,' answered Emily timidly.

'He is a scoundrel!' thundered Mr Leverton; 'or at least the son of a scoundrel, who robbed me of all my money.'

'Mr Maverley's intentions were as honest as yours, papa; and he lost his own fortune as you did. Besides, Edward is prepared to repay you.'

'What!' exclaimed Mr Leverton.

'To repay you all you lost—upon one condition.'

'And that?'

'That he becomes your son-in-law.'

'I thought so,' sneered Mr Leverton. 'No, Miss Emily. This,' he said, clapping me on the back, 'is the son-in-law to my taste—David Elworthy.'

'I fear not, sir,' I stammered out bashfully.

'What, David!' shouted Mr Leverton.

'I'll be back directly, sir,' I said; and catching up my hat and cane, hurried from the house.

In the space of an hour, I returned to Mr Leverton's lodgings, accompanied by Dr Gayfield, the faithful medical attendant of our family, who had known us boys and girls before we knew ourselves. He was short and stout, and the walk had put him considerably out of breath.

'Ugh, ugh; David, my child, what a hurry you are in! Consider the length of your legs, and the shortness of my wind. Bless me, what a big fellow you are grown, and only the other day I saw you short-coated!'

We found Mr Leverton pacing the room with short, fierce strides. Emily sat with a handkerchief

before her eyes; her face appeared unnaturally flushed.

'What, back again, David?' said her father, stopping abruptly in his walk. 'Who's this?'

'Dr Gayfield.'

'Divinity?'

'No, sir; medicine,' said the little doctor, with a smile and a bow.

'Hang it, David! I thought you had retracted your rash speech, and brought a parson to arrange preliminaries. We don't want a medical man. I am not ill, and Emily is only obstinate.'

I gathered together the small modicum of courage which animated my extensive frame; and rolling it up into a practicable lump, threw it, so to speak, at Mr Leverton's head.

'Sir,' I said, 'will you ask Dr Gayfield how old I am?'

'What mummery is this?' exclaimed my intending father-in-law. 'I know your age as well as he does. You were born in the month of September.'

'Exactly,' smiled Dr Gayfield.

'Eighteen hundred and twenty-three.'

'Holloa!' cried the doctor. 'We are now in July eighteen hundred and forty-four, sir, are we not?'

'Certainly.'

'Then you mean to say this child is nearly twenty-one?'

'Child!' said Mr Leverton. 'Child! Why do you call him child?'

'Because he is not yet fifteen. See, sir, if you will not believe my word, here is a copy of his baptismal certificate; original to be seen on application at St Timothy's Church.'

Mr Leverton took the paper in his hand. As he read it, his jaw dropped. 'Baptized in October eighteen twenty-nine. Born five weeks preceding, on the ninth of September. David,' he said, 'you are an impostor.'

'Yes, sir,' I replied meekly.

'And what is more, you are a monster—a hideous monster. Why, if you go on at this rate till you are really one-and-twenty, you will be ten feet high. Leave the house, you Typhoid!'

'Father,' exclaimed Emily indignantly, 'I will not listen to this language. Boy or man, Mr Elworthy has behaved with noble unselfishness.'

She crossed the room, and shook my hand warmly. The doctor and I presently quitted the house arm-in-arm. Old Leverton had behaved like a brute, but his daughter was an angel.

I have often seen her since, for she is the happy wife of Edward Maverley, or, as I jocularly call him, Jack the Giant-killer. They are my firmest friends. It seems that Edward defeated old Leverton. He had battled with grisly bears in America, and he determined to conquer this British specimen of the genus. He told Mr Leverton plainly, that he was prepared to repay him all that had been lost in his father's unlucky speculation; but that if he refused this proposition, he would run away with his daughter in spite of him. The recluse at length gave a sullen consent, and they were married. The restoration of his fortune had the same effect on the old fellow that the gold goblet had on Parnell's churlish miser; and although somewhat inordinately addicted to solitude and sniggering for eels, he made a tolerably amiable father-in-law.

It was long before I recovered my disappointment—in fact, I don't think I have ever recovered it,

for after nineteen years, I am still a bachelor. Nothing would induce me to return to Poplar House Academy. The story was all over the country, and the bare thought of Tubbs's brutal jests filled me with horror. So, after consulting with her friends, my mother sent me to a college in Germany. I should have preferred Patagonia, as my stature would there have been unnoticed, but unfortunately there are no educational establishments in that region. So I went to Beerland, and found my fellow-students less inclined to jeer at me than Englishmen. Except a few harmless jokes about the Brocken Spectre, I got on pretty comfortably.

I continued, however, to grow with frightful rapidity. I tried starving, I tried hard exercise, I tried Sybaritic indolence; all systems resulted in additional inches. At twenty-one, I was six feet eleven inches high. At that preposterous altitude, I feel thankful to say, I stopped. I am glad I am not seven feet; it enables me to say, in speaking of myself, I am above six feet, which, you know, is nothing extraordinary.

During the year after I ceased to grow, I measured myself about ten times a day. I had a machine constructed for the purpose. Did I imagine that I had increased half a barleycorn in height, I was miserable. But, thank goodness, I have stopped, and never wish to be wound-up again. There is comfort in the thought that declining years will bring a slight declension of stature.

I am now settled in London, for I find that, on the whole, the Cockneys stare less, and make fewer remarks on personal appearance, than country folks. I live quietly and unobtrusively on the interest of my five thousand pounds. The street-boys are my worst foes. Only yesterday, a rude boy, pointing to a pair of plump twins in a perambulator, shouted out: 'I say, Master Giant, wouldn't you like to have them two kids for your supper?' This to me who would not knowingly tread on a black beetle, is simply shameful. But I must bear my lot in patience.

THE OYSTER.

'WHAT is the difference,' sometimes inquires a venerable joker, 'between a good and a bad oyster?' 'The one is a Native, and the other is a *Settler*,' replies the respondent with a promptness that leads one to suspect he has been asked the same question before. Yet ancient as is the riddle, and common as is the former term applied to the oyster, it is doubtful whether many people know what a 'native' really means. Oysters are called 'native,' then, when they are born, bred, and fed in this country, and, as distinguished from American, French, Dutch, Mediterranean, and all other descriptions of that delicacy. A very simple elucidation of the mystery of a name. Again, there is a popular saying, that oysters should only be eaten in a month which has an 'r' in it; and this is in the main a very wholesome rule. June, July, and a part of August are their spawning-times, during which they are not only almost tasteless, but absolutely hurtful. A little book has been lately published,* which, under the gaudy and unpromising exterior of a railway volume, gives us the most interesting and exhaustive information respecting this agreeable mollusk, as well as some excellent practical advice. As an example of the latter, he tells us (what we ourselves are tired of telling our fishmonger) that oysters should always be opened in the lower

* *The Oyster: where, how, and when to Find, Breed, Cook, and Eat it.* Trübner & Co.

shell, thereby preserving the tonic liquor which Nature herself intended should be its only sauce. In nine London oyster-houses out of ten, this is not done, and when served at table, they are invariably placed on the flat shell. In Edinburgh, which boasts with reason of its 'Pandores,' they are often not served on the shell at all!

Oysters are of many different colours. In Spain, they are red or russet; in Illyria, they are brown, nay, black! Conceive the amazement of any legal gentleman lunching at Prosser's, and coming suddenly upon a black Illyrian! While those in the Red Sea are of all the colours of the rainbow. That Parisian delicacy, the green oyster, is brought from Brittany; but the same hue can be induced in others by putting them in pits where the water is about three feet deep in the salt-marshes, and where the sun has great power. The propagation of the oyster is effected by self-produced eggs, which it bears within in the form of a greenish milky juice, which it casts as spat in May. This liquor, if viewed through a microscope, will be found to contain multitudes of small oysters, covered with shells, and swimming nimbly about—one hundred and twenty of which extend about an inch. Indeed, one million of young have been discovered in a single oyster. Guarded by two tender shells, they move freely in the sea when ejected by their parent, until, by means of a glutinous substance, they fix themselves so fast to some object that they can be separated only by force. These young are very soon able to produce others—some say so soon as four months after birth—but even when as large as a crown-piece, the shell is still very tender and thin, and it is only after some years that they become fit for human food. The age of an oyster is not to be discovered like that of a horse. You may look a gift-oyster in the mouth, and indeed it is expected you should do so, but not upon its shell. 'It bears its years upon its back. Everybody who has handled an oyster-shell must have observed that it seems as if composed of successive layers or plates overlapping each other. These are technically called "shoots," and each of them marks a year's growth, so that, by counting them, we can determine at a glance the year when the creature came into the world. Up to the time of its maturity, the shoots are regular and successive; but after that time, they are piled one over the other, so that the shell becomes more and more thickened and bulky. Judging from the great thickness to which some oyster-shells have attained, this mollusk is capable, if left to its natural changes unmolested, of reaching a great age. Indeed, fossil oysters have been seen, of which each shell was nine inches thick, whence they may have been concluded to have been more than one hundred years old.' It seems wonderful that creatures so prolific and so long-lived should ever cost so much as a shilling a dozen (as they do at the present time) even with a French roll and butter included.

The offspring generally remain near the mother, which accounts for those huge oyster-banks in the sea, which in some places have attained such magnitude as to cause ships to be wrecked upon them. Their immense proportions may be best understood by inspection of the fossil oyster-bed near Reading. These fossils, which must have lain there from time immemorial, have just the same shape and substance as recent oyster-shells; and the bed occupies six acres, forming a stratum two feet thick. The fossil oyster-banks raised by earthquakes along the western shores of South America, measure from sixty to eighty feet in depth, are often forty miles in length, and in many cases, stretch about two miles into the interior.

It is asserted that oysters can move from one place to another, by suddenly admitting sea-water into their shells, which they open and shut with great power and rapidity, producing thereby a singular noise.

Whether oysters fall in love or not, is not decided by the natural history books, but it is certain that they have much natural instinct; for, when in a situation exposed to the variations of the tide, they seem to be aware that they have to remain for some hours without water, and consequently provide it in their shells. This makes such oysters far more fit to be conveyed to a distance than others, and is the reason why those of Colchester and Pyfleet, packed at the beds, are in such request.

It is not very difficult to recognise the place from which an oyster comes by its shell, since that exhibits to an educated eye the nature of the food on which it has fed; but the Romans pretended that they could discover this by the taste, and decide at the first bite whether the delicacy in question came from the Lacrine Sea, or Natolia. But *gourmets* have been liars from all time, down to the present, when they bemoan there being 'no more good port-wine to be got in the world, sir,' and date all occurrences from a Vintage year. When Britain (with its 'natives') was conquered, the Romans discovered that they had been making a great fuss about nothing, and that the little watery dabs, misnamed oysters, of the Mediterranean were only fit food for slaves. From that time, thousands were employed in procuring the genuine article, but at so vast an expense, that the Censors were obliged to interfere. Every rich epicure had a water-vivary, to keep the precious mollusks alive when they reached him, and something of that sort is recommended by our author even now to be used by oyster-eaters in the country. He actually gives them a receipt for making artificial sea-water, at the very reasonable rate of sixpence a gallon. Having received a barrel from some dear friend in town, then, listen to this, my country-gentleman. The moment an oyster opens its mouth, it dies, remember; therefore, on receipt of the little barrel, open it at once, by removing the top and the first hoop, and then replace the top on the uppermost layer of oysters, keeping it in position by some heavy weight; as the layers of oysters are required for the table, it is only necessary to continue this operation to keep the remainder fresh for a few days. The true oyster-eater will do even more than this for his favourites. He will unpack them, and place them in a flat dish, with artificial (or genuine) sea-water over them, whereby he may preserve them, if he will, for weeks, just as fresh as when they first left their beds.

BLANK PAPER.

'Tis but a blank and worthless leaf;
No writing there we find;
'Tis only fit to be destroyed,
And scattered to the wind.
Yet pause a while, and bring it near
Where the warm firelight glows;
Look now—behold, by chemic art,
The writing slowly grows,
Clear and distinct, thus aye 'twill be
Exposed to heat and light;
Removed from thence, and cold again,
It vanishes from sight.
Thus many a heart a blank appears,
Where hidden, unconfessed,
Unknown to all, God's writing there
Indelibly impressed,
Waits but the Spirit's heat and light,
In His good time revealed,
To shew what wondrous power and love
Were for a while concealed.

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